

LIFESTYLE

In Friday's Lifestyle, Christian Kirkpatrick reports on the 16th annual Capital Ball, 'Trenton: Capital of Industry,' to benefit a national treasure, the Old Barracks Museum.

9A The Princeton Packet

Tuesday, February 7, 2006

PACKET PICKS

Tuesday

A literary evening

The Friends of the Mary Jacobs Library present a program with poet and professor Susan Wheeler, sports writer Tom Verducci and Ralph Schoenstein, the author of 16 books — all of them funny.

The program will start at 8:15 p.m. at 64 Washington St., Rocky Hill. A wine-and- cheese reception for the members of the Friends of the Mary Jacobs Library will be held before the program at 7:30 p.m.

Besides being a book author, Mr. Schoenstein has also written pieces for magazines and newspapers such as The New Yorker, The New York Times, and Newsday. Mr. Verducci, a writer with Sports Illustrated, is considered one of the country's most widely respected voices in baseball. Susan Wheeler is an award-winning poet and fiction author who teaches at Princeton University. All three writers will speak about how they found their niches and why/when their work took its present form. The audience will be invited to ask questions and make comments.

For more information, call (609) 924-7073.

Wednesday

'Women's Lives'



Staff photo by Frank Wojciechowski

The Women's Club of Princeton today includes alumnae from 60 colleges and universities in the United States, Canada and Europe. Representing the club's membership, from left, are Ramona Peyton of Pennington, Carol Stawski of Pennington, Mary Lincoln of Lawrence, Mary Jelm-Hoffman of Plainsboro, Mary Beth McNamee of Lawrence, and Barbara Hynds Johnson of Princeton.

Making big strides

The Women's College Club of Princeton celebrates 90 years

The second installment of the joint film and discussion series, "Real Danger, Reel Danger: The Truth of Women's Lives," which focuses on the dangers that confront women around the world, continues at 7 p.m. with a screening of "Veronica Guerin" at 7 p.m.

The film is based on the life of Veronica Guerin, an Irish journalist who exposed Dublin's drug lords in the 1990s as a reporter for The Sunday Independent. It cost Ms. Guerin her life.

65 Witherspoon St., Princeton. For more information, visit www.princeton-library.org or call (609) 924-9529.

'Green Night'

The Central New Jersey Sierra Club presents "Green Night" at the West Windsor Public Library, 333 N. Post Road, West Windsor.

Everyone is invited to learn how to make a difference and have fun while doing it. The group will explore how individuals can help curb global warming in a few easy steps. In addition, attendees can learn what the group is doing to preserve Mercer County. There will be food, fun, environmentally friendly goods, and postcards to sign.

For more information, visit njsierra.org.

Thursday

Enlightenment art

Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, author of "Painterly Enlightenment," will be signing books at the Princeton University Store, 36 University Place, Princeton, 7 p.m.

In his latest book, Mr. Kaufmann offers the most comprehensive study available of Austrian fresco painter Franz Anton Maulbertsch, one of the leading architectural painters of the 18th century. His analysis of Maulbertsch also sheds light on the relationship between the Enlightenment and the arts.

For more information, visit www.pustore.com or call (609) 921-8500.

By Dennis O'Neill
Special Writer

Longtime Princeton resident Jane Coda commuted to the United Nations in 1955 where she worked as a translator.

"I was the only woman on the platform going into New York," she recalled.

As a career woman with a daily commute time of two-and-a-half hours one-way, she had little contact with (and time for) community activities. However, she remembers reading about a meeting of the Women's College Club of Princeton and an interesting guest speaker.

"I called the number and they sent me an application," she said. "The dues were only \$3 a year so I didn't have much to lose," she added with a laugh.

Cheap dues are not what have sustained her membership for more than 50 years. It has been the club's longtime commitment to promoting college education among the young women of Princeton and providing them financial assistance to further their studies.

This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Women's College Club of Princeton. The group has planned a series of programs to commemorate its history, including prominent guest speakers to discuss the changing role of women in higher education over the last century.

Club historian Ruth Woodward said the group was founded in 1916 with 43 charter members — all college graduates, mostly the wives of Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary faculty. The group also included 18 associate members (without college degrees) who supported the club's goals.

"Many young women back then did not have the expectation of going on to college as they do now," Mrs. Woodward said. "The first members were not only offering financial assistance, they were urging young women to continue their education."

The threefold purpose of the club was to identify colleges open to women, promote camaraderie among alumnae, and raise money to help Princeton women attend college. Dues were only \$2 a year at that time, and the group relied heavily on fundraisers.

One of the group's earliest fundraisers was at the Princeton-Yale football game on Nov. 18, 1916. "Not many cars were coming into town, so it wasn't a tailgate picnic," chuckled Mrs. Woodward. "The women served lunch to the visitors who arrived by train at University Place."

Today, the club's main fundraising events are its annual Fall Fashion Show and Spring Bridge Benefit. Scholarship funds also come from annual dues, investments, trips, corporate donors and member donations and bequests.

Before 1928, the club only provided interest-free loans. Since then, it has awarded scholarships and, earlier in its history, prizes for excellence in English.

In 1928, the club awarded \$250 in scholarships. Last year, nine award recipients received \$21,000 in scholarship money. Two corporate donors contributed to the fund — Merrill Lynch and Bristol-Myers Squibb — and five bequest scholarships were awarded in memory of former club members Molly B. Updike, Harriet T. Peterson, Marcia Powell, Luna Kayser and Florence Bell Hillier.

Since its founding the club has awarded nearly \$250,000 in scholarships to the young women of Princeton.

Besides the business of raising and awarding scholarship money, the club also promotes many social events, including its monthly trips. Coordinated by longtime member Marge White, club members and

Selected highlights of 1916

- World War I rages in Europe. Unprecedented death and destruction. New forms of warfare: German Zeppelins bomb Paris; tanks deployed on the battlefield during the Battle of the Somme.
- Woodrow Wilson narrowly wins reelection as president.
- Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Albert Einstein presents The Theory of General Relativity.
- Emma Goldman arrested for lecturing on birth control.
- Dutch women march for suffrage.
- Norway approves women's suffrage.
- First published reference to "jazz."
- Coca-Cola introduces the "classic Coke" formula.

Aug. 26, 1920: The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, outlawing the denial of voting rights "on account of sex," is ratified. The National Women's Party ceases to exist, metamorphosing into the League of Women Voters.

guests often carpool to tour sites such as the Pearl Buck Estate, the James Michener Museum, the Doris Duke Mansion and the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University.

"Our primary purpose is to help young women with their education, but meantime we try to have a good time," Mrs. White said.

When Kathy Hutchins moved to Princeton two years ago, she wanted to plan something special when her best friend came down from Massachusetts to visit her new home. She signed up for the club's trip to the Mercer Museum in Doylestown, Pa.

"These women were wonderful and very welcoming to me and my friend," Mrs. Hutchins said. "They were so kind, generous and funny that by the end of the day I decided I'd better join them."

Merry Beth McNamee also joined the club two years ago after moving to West Windsor from Cleveland. While shopping for her granddaughters, she struck up a conversation with the club's president, Barbara Hynds Johnson, who invited her to a meeting.

"Besides the camaraderie of these lovely women, I was struck by their strong sense of purpose," Mrs. McNamee said. "These women are like ripples on the water — their efforts go out and touch so many other lives."

In 1966, during its 50th anniversary year, the club boasted more than 400 members. Today, although membership has declined (110), more than 60 colleges and universities are represented, including alumnae from Europe and Canada.

Earlier in its history, the Women's College Club excluded graduates outside the elite circle of schools such as the Seven Sisters (Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Radcliffe, Smith, Vassar and Wellesley), or notable institutions, such as Chicago, Cornell, Northwestern, Oxford and Oberlin. However, by-law changes in the last few years have made the club more inclusive, a change celebrated by club president Barbara Hynds Johnson.



The club's 50th anniversary was celebrated in 1966 with a luncheon at the Nassau Inn. Honorees included Mrs. George Beggs, left, and Mrs. Irving W. Mershon, right, charter members. Seated between them is Mrs. James Hedberg. The luncheon program featured members performing in skits that depicted each decade of the club's history, from the World War I era through the Swinging '60s.

"Too many gifted and well-educated women had been excluded in the past," Mrs. Johnson said. "I would have been turned down for membership back in the '70s."

Kathy Hutchins, a graduate of Smith College in Northampton, Mass., would also like to see the club broaden its awards to include recipients attending community colleges.

"Not everyone can afford a four-year school," she said. "Girls going to prestigious schools usually have advisers who know the ropes of financial aid. But I'd like to help girls who may not have advisers, or are not part of the network of receiving money."

Lorraine Hauck of Monroe Township is a graduate of CW Post of Long Island University. She began attending club events a year ago and finally joined last spring. Recently retired, she volunteered to chair the club's membership drive.

"As a young woman from a small town in South Jersey, I was fortunate to receive a scholarship," Mrs. Hauck said. "Joining these women and finding new members is my way of repaying that."

Jane Coda said that changes to the Women's College Club of Princeton over the years have reflected the changing role of women in education and their career choices. Ironically, the success of the club's founding purpose — to promote higher education among young women — may be the reason for its smaller membership numbers. As more women take to the commuter platform with successful careers, fewer women have time to join the club.

"I like to think more of the consistency of the club, rather than the changes," Mrs. Coda said. "Change is a matter of keeping up with the times, but what has been consistent is the effort to help young women go to college and excel."

Last year, the club's prestigious Florence B. Hillier award went to a young woman attending Princeton University. The woman's mother sent the club a thank-you note with a photo of her daughter and her entire family posing in front of the university on her first day of school.

"That's the satisfaction I get from being a member of this club," Mrs. Coda said. "The kind of satisfaction that comes from making a difference in people's lives."

Inquiries concerning the Women's College Club of Princeton should be addressed to Mary Laity, 29 Gordon Way, Princeton 08540.